

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 58

By Camper

A RESOLUTION to recognize Earl Stafford Sr., and the Stafford Foundation for sponsoring the People's Inaugural Project.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that this General Assembly should pause to recognize those selfless individuals and generous institutions that give of their time and resources in the name of civic inclusion and the spirit of democracy; and

WHEREAS, Earl Stafford Sr., and his family's charity, the Stafford Foundation, have demonstrated a firm commitment to the principle of democratic inclusion, the idea that men and women from all walks of life should not only be tolerated but encouraged to participate in the civic life of the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, the Foundation, along with a small group of other sponsors, initiated the People's Inaugural Project, an effort to bring together a diverse group to celebrate the birth, life, and sacrifice of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the inauguration of President Barack Obama; and

WHEREAS, the festivities, held at the luxurious JW Marriott in Washington, D.C., over the course of two days and nights, included two inaugural balls, the People's Inaugural Ball, and a ball for youth, so that they might be inspired to civic participation some day; and

WHEREAS, the preceding Monday included a prayer breakfast and a luncheon, at which Martin Luther King III was scheduled as the guest of honor; these events commemorated Dr. King and his inestimable contributions on behalf of those who have been forced to the margins of American democracy; and

WHEREAS, a third of all the invited attendees were chosen from the ranks of the nation's poor, its wounded soldiers, the terminally ill, and the many volunteers who have given selflessly of themselves that their fellow citizens might enjoy better lives; and

WHEREAS, the Foundation and its fellow sponsors provided ball gowns, tuxedos, hairstylists, and make-up artists for those most honored guests; and

WHEREAS, founder, chairman, and chief executive officer of Universal Systems and Technology, based in Centerville, Virginia, Earl Stafford, Sr., was raised in Mount Holly, New Jersey, and his father was the minister of the Second Baptist Church there; and

WHEREAS, from a very early age, Mr. Stafford learned from his father and the faith they both practiced that earthly riches become true wealth only when they are given to others with no expectation of return; the Stafford Foundation is an embodiment of this great spiritual lesson; and

WHEREAS, Earl Stafford, Sr., is an active and devout member of Alexandria's Alfred Street Baptist Church, one of the oldest African American churches in the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of the United States of America are fortunate to have as a friend and patron Mr. Earl Stafford, Sr., a man who has chosen to use his good fortune for the betterment of his fellows, especially those who struggle the hardest and cannot afford to take anything for granted; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor and commend Mr. Earl Stafford, Sr., and the Stafford Foundation for making possible the People's Inaugural Project, thank them for their commitment to the virtues of charity and inclusion, and extend to them our best wishes for further success in the future.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.